

## Moriz Winternitz

The ninth of January 1937 was a sad one for the science of Indology. In the early hours of this day, Prof. Moriz Winternitz, one of the last "universal indologists",<sup>1</sup> passed away. Peaceful, as he has been during his life, he also entered the Great Unknown peacefully. Moriz Winternitz was born on December 23, 1863, in Horn, a provincial town of Lower Austria, in the family of the merchant Bernhard Winternitz. When a little boy, he proved extraordinary intelligent and he started reading and writing even Hebrew before entering the elementary school. In 1880, after having finished the grammar-school (Gymnasium) in his native town, he went to the University at Vienna where he began to study classical philology and philosophy. But soon Friedrich Müller who lectured on comparative philology and ethnography, and particularly George Bühler who was, after his return from India, in 1881, inaugurating his indological lectures at Vienna, interested the young student in the sciences of indology and ethnology. Among his teachers, we have to mention also Eugen Hultsch, a name well-known by his activity in India, who was at that time Privatdozent in the University of Vienna. He introduced Winternitz in the Indian narrative literature and the language of the Pāli Canon. In 1886, Winternitz submitted his thesis on 'Ancient Indian marriage ritual according to Āpastamba, compared with the marriage customs of the Indo-European peoples' and got his diploma of Ph.D. (Vienna).

Only two years later, Winternitz became upon Bühler's recommendation Amanuensis of Prof. Friedrich Max Müller at Oxford

<sup>1</sup> An expression used by Winternitz's great teacher, G. Bühler. Cf. M. Winternitz, *George Bühler und die Indologie*, München 1898 (an offprint from *Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 21st and 23rd, 1898), p. 23.

and assisted the famous scholar in preparing the second edition of the *R̥gveda* with Sāyaṇa's commentary, from 1888 to 1892. After finishing this great task successfully, he stayed some years more at Oxford till 1898. In 1891 he became a teacher at the Oxford High School for Girls; from 1891 to 1898 he acted as a Lecturer of German at the Association for the Promotion of Higher Education of Women in Oxford and as a private tutor of German and Sanskrit; for some time he was on the examining board for the Indian Civil Service. In 1895, too, he became the Librarian of the Indian Institute at Oxford. It is amazing, how many duties Winternitz took upon himself, without hampering his regular scientific work. He was a man of indefatigable activity, not only in his youthful days, but even in his old age. Surely, he had to earn his living, especially since he had married Fanny Reik in 1892 and had to support a growing family.

In 1899 Winternitz shifted to Prague which belonged to Austria at that time, and was appointed a Lecturer (*Privatdozent*) of Indo-Aryan Philology and Ethnology at the oldest German University. In 1902 he became an Assistant Professor and in 1911 he got the chair of these subjects. Until his predecessor, Alfred Ludwig, who was the first German interpreter of the *R̥gveda*, the study of Indology was combined with that of comparative philology of the Indo-European languages at the Prague German University. Thus, Winternitz was the first professor of Indology at that University and we may call him, in the very sense of the word, the founder of indological studies at Prague. His energy was directed to the supply of means of both instruction and scientific work. Many modern indological works were at his request acquired by the Prague University Library of which he was one of the most frequent visitors. In 1904 the Austrian Ministry of Public Instruction agreed to his request to establish a special library of indology and ethnology at the Prague German

University. The great war (1914-18) interrupted the development of this institution, but twenty years after its foundation, in 1924, Winternitz was glad to see it changed into an Indological 'Seminar' with a separate room and with better possibilities for further expansion.

In 1905, the loss of his wife was a severe blow to Winternitz. But a good fate gave him, three years later, a second wife in Berta Nagel who was not only a true guardian angel of his home, but also a veritable second mother to his five children. Her death in 1932 was surely one of the causes of his fatal illness.

In 1921, in the month of June, being just elected Dean of the Faculty of Letters for 1921-22, Winternitz could welcome his friend, the great Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore, as a guest of the German University at Prague. A year later, in November 1922, he accepted Tagore's invitation to spend a year as a visiting professor at his *Viśvabhāratī* in *Sāntiniketan* during 1922-23. There it was his aim to teach his Indian pupils what the late Sir Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar pointed out as the drawback of Indian scholars and what was one of the few good things India could learn from the Western world, I mean, the critical methods which led the European science from success to success. Not only at *Sāntiniketan* but also at a few other academic centres he spent his time during his sojourn in India, to the people and culture of which he had devoted his life-work. His first trip after having disembarked at Bombay was to Poona to see the progress of the editorial work of the *Mahābhārata*. On his journeys from Kashmir down to Ceylon, he delivered lectures and speeches at many Universities and meetings of learned societies at Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, etc., and he discussed the most important problems of indological research with the Indian scholars. Always he was of good health, but on his return journey he fell sick of malaria which put the germ of death into his body.

Within the last fifteen years of his life, many honours have been conferred on Winternitz. He was elected Honorary member of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, of the American Oriental Society, of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute at Poona, and Corresponding Member of the Society of Eastern Asiatic Art at Berlin. Since the Oriental Institute at Prague had been inaugurated, Winternitz became a Fellow of this Institute and a member of the Committee. He was also a Fellow of the German Society of Sciences and Arts in the Czechoslovak Republic. In 1932 the Hardy Prize was bestowed upon him for his research work. When he celebrated his 70th birthday in 1933, many scholars, pupils and friends honoured him by a *Festschrift* (Leipzig 1933) as well as by a special number of the *Archiv Orientalní* (VI, 1934, No. 1) published on that occasion. He retired from his academic duties in 1934 after having discharged them fully during 35 years; his only aim was to devote all his leisure now won to scientific work. Illness, however, undermined his strength more and more, leading to his sudden death.

Winternitz's literary work was very extensive. Its bibliography<sup>2</sup> comprises 452 items belonging to the most different branches of human knowledge. As we see from his thesis mentioned above, his first interest was devoted to the study of the ancient Indian customs and religion and their connection with those of other Indo-European peoples. At that time there were no, or at least not yet critical, editions of the Indian sources. The scholars, and among them also Winternitz, had to use often manuscripts of the texts for their work. A fruit of these studies is his first critical edition of the *Āpastambīya Gṛhyasūtra* with extracts from the commentaries of Haradatta and Sudarśanārya, (Vienna 1887), a brilliant example of the methods of text criticism. As the Mantras

<sup>2</sup> Published by O. Stein and the present writer in *Archiv Orientalní*, 6, 1934, pp. 275-291, and 9, 1937, pp. 225-228.

are not given in this Sūtra of the Āpastambins, Winternitz published them separately ten years later under the title: *The Mantrapāṭha or the Prayer Book of the Āpastambins*. Edited together with the commentary of Haradatta and translated. First Part: Introduction, Sanskrit Text, Varietas Lectionis and Appendices (Oxford 1897, Anecdota Oxoniensia, Aryan Series, No. III, 8). He also enlarged his thesis, based only on the Gṛhyasūtra of the Āpastamba school, by using other Gṛhya-texts and published it in 1892 in the Transactions of the Imperial Academy of Sciences at Vienna (*“Das altindische Hochzeitsrituell nach dem Āpastambiya-Gṛhyasūtra und einigen anderen verwandten Werken. Mit Vergleichung der Hochzeitsgebräuche bei den uebrigen indogermanischen Voelkern”*). Besides these works, he wrote many other smaller essays on the ancient Indian and Indo-European religion, cult, and customs in Journals, e.g., on the sacrifice at building (*Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien*, 17, 1887, 37-40), on the Sarpabali (*ibidem*, 18, 1888, 25-52, 250-264), ‘Notes on Śrāddhas and Ancestral Worship among the Indo-European Nations’ (*WZKM.*, 4, 1890, 199-212). ‘On a Comparative Study of Indo-European Customs, with special reference to the Marriage Customs’ (*Transactions of the Internat. Folklore Congress*, 1891, London 1892, 267-291), ‘Witchcraft in Ancient India’ (reprinted in *Ind. Ant.*, 28, 1899, 71-83); but also in later years he returned to such topics like “on the choice of bride according to the Bhāradvājagṛhyasūtra” (*WZKM.*, 28, 1914, 16-20), or “on the doctrine of the Āśramas” (*Festgabe H. Jacobi*, Bonn 1926, 215-227).

During his stay in England, Winternitz was associated with the *Sacred Books of the East*, edited by F. Max Müller. He compiled the Indexes to G. Thibaut’s translation of the *Vedānta-Sūtras* (Parts I, II, Oxford 1896, Part III, Oxford 1904). This work, however, was only preliminary to his voluminous *General*

*Index to the Names and Subject-Matter of the Sacred Books of the East* (Oxford 1910, *The Sacred Books of the East*, vol. L) to which the publisher gave later the new and appropriate title *A Concise Dictionary of Eastern Religion*. Only a person who is acquainted with the hard work of compiling Indexes of so different topics of such various cultures will appreciate the enormous labour spent on this work and the ability with which Winternitz complied with his task.

In his capacity as Librarian, Winternitz was entrusted with the work of cataloguing Sanskrit Manuscripts in England. When he was leaving Oxford, the result of his work was brought to a conclusion by his successors; in 1902, "*A Catalogue of South Indian Sanskrit Manuscripts* (especially those of the Whish Collection) belonging to the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland" (*Asiatic Society Monographs*, No. 2) was published in London, having been finished by F. W. Thomas. Another *Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library*, Vol. II, begun by Winternitz, was continued and completed by A. B. Keith and appeared at Oxford in 1905.

While working on the Sanskrit Manuscripts, Winternitz recognised the immense value of the South Indian Mahābhārata MSS. for the reconstruction of the Mahābhārata text. In his prolegomena "On the South-Indian Recension of the Mahābhārata" (*Ind. Ant.*, 27, 1898, 67-81; 92-104; 122-136) he indicated the way in which the criticism of the Mahābhārata should proceed. Already in 1897 he had written his "Notes on the Mahābhārata," with special reference to Dahlmann's "Mahābhārata" (*JRAS.*, 1897, 713-759). From that time till the end of his life he maintained the line of his life-work viz., a critical edition of the Mahābhārata. In the following year he wrote also his papers 'On the Mahābhārata MSS. in the Whish Collection of the Royal Asiatic Society' (*JRAS.*, 1898, 147-150) and

on 'Gaṇeśa in the Mahābhārata' (*JRAS.*, 1898, 380-384). In 1899 he made his first 'Proposal for the Formation of a Sanskrit Epic Text Society to be laid before the Indian Section of the XIIIth International Congress of Orientalists held at Rome', published in the *Bulletins of the Congress*, No. 3, pp. 46-49. His next essay 'Genesis des Mahābhārata' (*WZKM.*, 14, 1900, 51-77) dealt with the authorship of the great Epic. The plan of the Sanskrit Epic Text Society was laid before the public again in *Ind. Ant.*, 30, 1901, 117-120. In the same year he presented his 'Promemoria ueber die Nothwendigkeit einer kritischen Ausgabe des Mahābhārata, insbesondere in der suedindischen Rezension' to the Imperial Academy of Sciences at Vienna (published in the *Almanach of the Academy* 51, 1901, 206-210). Later on, he dealt with the Sabhāparvan in the South-Indian Recension of the Mahābhārata (*WZKM.*, 17, 1903, 70-75), 'The Mahābhārata and the Drama' (*JRAS.*, 1903, 571f.), the serpent sacrifice of the Mahābhārata (*Kulturgeschichtliches aus der Tierwelt*, Prag 1904, 68-80), and the Brhaddevatā and the Mahābh. (*WZKM.*, 20, 1906, 1-36). Finally, in 1904 a new 'Promemoria' on the plan of a critical edition of the Mahābh. was drawn up by Jacobi, Lüders and himself according to a mandate of the Academies and learned societies at Göttingen, Leipzig, Munich and Vienna on the basis of which the International Association of Academies decided to accept a critical edition of the Mahābhārata among its enterprises. A fund was established to support the collators of the Mahābhārata MSS. financially. Alas, all the work was stopped by the war in 1914. Therefore, it was a great satisfaction for Winternitz, when in 1918 the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Poona resumed the old plan with fresh means. The papers 'The Virāṭaparvan of the Mahābhārata ed. by N. B. Utgikar' (*ABhI.*, 5, 1924, 19-30), 'The Critical Edition of the Mahābhārata' (*Indol. Prag.*, I, 1929, 58-68), 'Die kritische Ausgabe des Mahābhārata' (*Forschungen*

und Fortschritte, 8, 1932, 427f.), and 'The Critical Edition of the Mahābhārata: Ādiparvan' (*ABbl.*, 15, 1934, 159-175) are his responses to the newly inaugurated work. He himself would have contributed the Sabhāparvan to the great undertaking, but other urgent works prevented him from achieving his cherished object.

It is not surprising that a scholar who had devoted so much interest and labour to one of the most important works of the Indian literature did not reject the proposal made to him by a great publishing house at Leipzig, asking him to write a history of the Indian literature for a series known as the Literatures of the East. Thus the first part of the first volume of his *Geschichte der indischen Litteratur*, dealing with the Veda, was published in 1905; the second part, devoted to the great Epics and to the Purāṇas, followed in 1908. The second volume was issued also in two parts, comprising the Buddhist Literature (1913) and the sacred texts of the Jainas (1920). The third and last volume (1922) contains the ornate poetry, the scientific literature, a short sketch of the modern Indian vernacular literature and additions to all the three volumes. But there is a great difference between the three volumes. It was the original aim of the publisher to bring out a literary history for the general reader. With the second volume the popular character of the description receded step by step into the background and the scientific point of view became prominent. This development was quite natural as the subject-matter of the second and third volumes offered much more tough problems which were not yet sufficiently discussed by the scholars and therefore not ripe for a popular treatment. Winternitz himself felt this dissonance and wished to reconstruct the first volume and bring up-to-date the whole work that he saw developing more and more his life-work. As the German publisher, due to the bad financial condition of the post-war Germany, was not able to bring out a revised edition, Winternitz was glad to accept the offer of the Calcutta University where he



had delivered lectures on the most important problems of Indian literary history in 1923 (published in the *Calcutta Review*, 1923 and 1924, and collected in book form under the title *Some problems of Indian Literature*, Calcutta 1925) to publish an English translation in order to make this standard work accessible to all Indian students. The first volume of this revised *History of Indian Literature* which—we may say—is a quite new work, appeared in 1927, the second volume in 1933. Only the first chapters of the third volume were sent to the press when the author had to leave it for ever.

When Winternitz undertook the task of writing a history of Indian literature, he was not aware of all the difficulties he would have to face. But he was the right man to fight against any and every problem. These struggles brought forth many essays, booklets and even books. It is impossible to quote them all, we shall mention only the most important ones. Thus, the result of his preliminary research into the Buddhist literature is his anthology of Buddhism in the *Religionsgeschichtliches Lesebuch* edited by A. Bertholet (Tübingen 1908, pp. 214-322). A new revised edition was issued in 1929 as No. 11 of the *Lesebuch* under the title *Der aeltere Buddhismus nach Texten des Tipiṭaka*. In 1930, he added a second volume (*Der Mahāyāna-Buddhismus nach Sanskrit und Prākṛit texten*) giving specimens of translations of the most important Mahāyāna Buddhist texts (No. 15 of the *Lesebuch*). He wrote also papers on the Buddhist Sanskrit literature (*WZKM.*, 26, 1912, 237-252, and 27, 1913, 33-47), on the Jātakas (*Ostas. Zeitschr.*, 2, 1913/14, 259-265 and in the *ERE.*, 7, 1914, 491-494), on 'Jātaka Gāthās and Jātaka Commentary' (*IHQ.*, 4, 1928, 1-14), on 'Gotama the Buddha, what do we know of him and his teaching?' (*Arch. Or.*, 1, 1929, 235-246), on the Pāli Canon, the earlier Buddhism and its history (*Studia Indo-Iranica*, Leipzig 1931, 63-72), on 'Problems of Buddhism' (*The Visva Bharati Quarterly*,

NS. II, 1936, Part I, 41-60). The study of the Jaina Canon brought him in contact with the chief leaders of the Jaina religion, the late Jaina Saint Vijaya Dharma Sūri was his friend; Winternitz was the single European who took part in the ceremonies connected with the consecration of the commemorative temple of this Saint at Shivapuri, Gwalior State, and he described them in the *Zeitschrift für Buddhismus*, 7, 1926, 349-377, to the regret of all, the only reminiscence of his Indian travels. In that connection, we may mention also his paper 'The Jainas in the History of Indian Literature' (*Indian Culture*, 1, 1934, 143-166). The research work done with regard to the third volume of the *History of Indian Literature* brought forth many further essays, e.g., on the Dialogue, Ākhyāna and Drama in the Indian literature (*WZKM.*, 23, 1909, 102-137) where he dealt with the problem of the beginnings of the Indian drama, on the Indian narrative literature (*Deutsche Lit.-Ztg.*, 31, 1910, 2693-2702, 2757-2767), especially on the Tāntrākhyāyika (*WZKM.*, 25, 1911, 49-62), on the Kṛṣṇa dramas (*ZDMG.*, 74, 1920, 118-144), on the Bhāsa problem (*Ostas. Zeitschr.*, 9, 1920/22, 282-299), on 'Kauṭilya and the Art of Politics in Ancient India' (*The Visva Bharati Quarterly*, I, 1923, 261-267), on 'Dharmaśāstra and Arthaśāstra' (*Sir Asutosh Memorial Volume*, Patna 1926, Part I, 25-48), on new Arthaśāstra MSS. (*Zeitschr. f. Indol. u. Iran.*, 6, 1928, 14-27), on fairy-tales within the narrative literature of the peoples (*Arch. Or.*, 4, 1932, 225-249), on the Bhāvaśataka (*IHQ.*, 12, 1936, 134-137 and 517), again on 'Bhāsa and the Mahābhārata and Kṛṣṇa Plays of the Trivandrum Series' (*Bulletin of the Rama Varma Research Institute*, vol. V, 1937, Part I, 1-15), etc. His 'Notes on the Guhyasamāja-Tantra and the Age of the Tantras' (*IHQ.*, 9, 1933, 1-10) offered a new insight into that difficult problem.

In his works treating Indian religion and folklore, Winternitz took always notice of the Indo-European and generally e t h n o -

logical relations. During his stay in England he translated Max Müller's *Anthropological Religion* into German (Leipzig 1894) and a year later the work of the same scholar *Theosophy or Psychological Religion* (Leipzig 1895). Besides different smaller papers on ethnological subjects, we may mention his notes on the Malayan popular religion (*WZKM.*, 14, 1900, 243-264). When he was appointed also a lecturer of Ethnology at the Prague German University, he wished to throw light on the mutual relations of ethnology, folklore and philology; the result of his reflexions was the paper 'Völkercunde, Volkskunde und Philologie' (*Globus*, 78, 1900, 345-350, 370-377). In the essay "Die Flutsagen des Alterthums und der Naturvölker" (*Mitteil. d. Anthropol. Ges.*, Vienna, 31, 1901, 305-333) he compared the myths of the deluge of many peoples of the world in ancient and modern times. His booklet 'Was wissen wir von den Indo-germanen?' (München 1903, being an off-print from the *Allgemeine Zeitung*) gave a clear survey of the problem of the Indo-European people ('Urvolk') and their culture. He wrote on mankind, race, and nation (*Monatschrift d. Oesterr.-Israelitischen Union*, 16, 1904, 4-31) as well as on 'The Unity of Mankind' (*The Visva Bharati Quarterly*, NS. I, 1935, Part II, 1-14) more than thirty years later. Even in the last years of his life he collected materials for a big work on the modern race questions.

In the very beginnings of his scientific work devoted to the marriage customs, Winternitz had to deal with woman of ancient India. He returned to this subject in his essay on the widow in the Veda (*WZKM.*, 29, 1915, 172-203) and in his extensively planned work *Die Frau in den indischen Religionen. I. Teil: Die Frau im Brahmanismus* (Leipzig 1920). Even this project could not be carried out. Surely, there is an inner and close connection of cause and effect between his scientific interest in the Indian womanhood and his courageous fighting for the emancipation of women.

not only in his country and in Europe, but in the whole world. In newspapers and reviews, in lectures and speeches, he defended the aspirations of political equality as well as the economical and cultural progress of women from his humanistic point of view. In many women's associations he was a leading brain till his old age. In recent times, he had the satisfaction that his intentions got their realization at least in many countries of Europe.

It is easily to be understood, that Winternitz as a historian of religion became a moral philosopher too. From his treatise on the ethics in the sacred books of the Indians, Persians and Chinese (*Deutsche Arbeit*, 6, 1906-7, 486-489, 590-592, 619-625) a direct line leads to his booklet 'Religion und Moral' (Prag 1922, *Schriften der Deutschen Gesellschaft für sittliche Erziehung*, No. 2); here he surveys the relation of religion and ethics in the history and literature of many peoples and creates the base of the working programme of the German Society for Ethical Education, founded by him and some other friends of his at Prague. According to his ethical principles, Winternitz was a thorough pacifist and condemned the war and an exaggerated nationalism on many occasions. In this connection, we may refer to the special interest shown by him in Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore in a number of papers and public lectures. His booklet 'Rabindranath Tagore. Religion und Weltanschauung des Dichters' (Prag 1936, *Schriften d. Deutsch. Ges. f. sittl. Erz.*, No. 13), dedicated to the 75th birthday of the poet, was his last reverence offered to the eminent Indian spiritual teacher.

Winternitz's style in his publications was always clear and simple. Nevertheless, he was a master of the word, and always he required of his pupils, too, to use a correct diction in their writings. There are no superfluous phrases, no vast and vague theories disturbing the logical flow of his arguments. He was a man of facts working *sine ira et studio*, and he never

constructed a higher building of conclusions than the substructure of facts allowed.

In personal contact, Winternitz was a gentle and noble-minded man. At the first moment, he seemed to be of a reserved nature. Yet under this hard exterior there was hidden a golden heart. Nobody asked in vain for his help or advice.

Winternitz has left this world, but his works are with us and with the future generations, as a well-known Indian saying runs;  
 n a h i k a r m a k ṣ ī y a t e!

W. GAMPERT.